

# **PRESS RELEASE: NCUIH Publishes Innovative Report on Traditional Healing at Urban Indian Organizations**

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*Report details benefits of Traditional Healing for American Indians and Alaska Natives and the need for reimbursement for these services*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 30, 2024)** – The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is proud to announce the publication of its report entitled “Recent Trends in Third-Party Billing at Urban Indian Organizations: Thematic Analysis of Traditional Healing Programs at Urban Indian Organizations and Meta-Analysis of Health Outcomes.”

**“This report is the result of a ground-breaking study focusing on how Urban Indian Organizations administer, evaluate, and fund traditional healing services. Our research shows that the ability to provide and be reimbursed for culturally relevant services will provide an even greater opportunity to provide whole-person care,”** says NCUIH CEO Francys Creiver, J.D. (Algonquin).

The report explains how traditional healing services can have a demonstrably positive impact on the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives but that funding remains a significant impediment to expanding access to these services at UIOs.

## **Background**

This report serves as an update to the National Council of Urban Indian Health’s previous reporting on recent trends in third-party billing at UIOs. This year’s focus on how UIOs administer, evaluate, and fund traditional healing services reflects UIOs’ commitment to expanding access to traditional healing for American Indians and Alaska Natives in urban areas. The report has a particular focus on Medicaid reimbursement for traditional healing because Medicaid is a significant source of health coverage for UIO patients, but many UIOs have reported difficulty receiving reimbursement for traditional healing services. NCUIH’s prior reports are publicly available at: <https://ncuih.org/research/third-party-billing/>.

## **Next Steps**

Recognizing the importance of culturally appropriate care, four states have initiated efforts to expand reimbursement for these services at Indian Health Service facilities, Tribal Health Centers, and UIOs. Arizona, California, Oregon, and New Mexico have submitted traditional healing reimbursement proposals to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) using Section

1115(a) demonstration waivers. NCUIH continues to educate policymakers regarding the importance of traditional healing for American Indians and Alaska Natives in urban areas and the importance of developing reimbursement models that are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

## **About NCUIH**

The National Council of Urban Indian Health is a national non-profit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally competent health and public health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban areas. NCUIH is a national organization advocating for the 41 Title V Urban Indian Organizations under the Indian Health Service in the *Indian Health Care Improvement Act*.

NCUIH respects and supports Tribal sovereignty and the unique government-to-government relationship between our Tribal Nations and the United States. NCUIH works to support those federal laws, policies, and procedures that respect and uplift Tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship. NCUIH does not support any federal law, policy, or procedure that infringes upon or in any way diminishes Tribal sovereignty or the government-to-government relationship.

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